



TEL +1 778 782 3925
 FAX +1 778 782 5876
 sfu.ca/vpacademic

Simon Fraser University
 Strand Hall 3100
 8888 University Drive
 Burnaby BC
 Canada V5A 1S6

MEMORANDUM

ATTENTION: Senate

TEL

FROM: Peter Keller, Vice-President, Academic and Provost, and Chair, SCUP

RE: External Review of the School of Public Policy (SCUP 16-41)

DATE: November 16, 2016

TIME

At its November 9, 2016 meeting, SCUP reviewed and approved the Action Plan for the School of Public Policy that resulted from its external review.

The Educational Goals Assessment Plan was reviewed and is attached for the information of Senate.

Motion:

That Senate approve the Action Plan for the School of Public Policy that resulted from its External Review.

c: N. Olewiler
 J. Pulkingham



8888 University Drive, Burnaby, BC
Canada V5A 1S6

TEL: 778.782.4636
FAX: 778.782.5876

avpcio@sfu.ca
www.sfu.ca/vpacademic

MEMORANDUM

ATTENTION Peter Keller, Chair, SCUP **DATE** September 27, 2016
FROM Gord Myers, Associate Vice President, Academic **PAGES** 1/1
RE: Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences: External Review of the School of Public Policy

Attached are the External Review Report and the Action Plan for the School of Public Policy. The Educational Goals Assessment Plan is included, for information only, with the Action Plan. This was the first external review of the School of Public Policy. The School was established in May 2010 and was previously called the Master of Public Policy Program.

Excerpt from the External Review Report:

"...the teaching program of the SPP is extremely popular with students and alumni. Both groups were virtually unanimous in their view that the MPP program provided them with a unique and valuable experience, gave them tremendous interaction with experienced faculty, and offered them a firm grounding that prepared them for a number of different career options."

Following the site visit, the Report of the External Review Team* for the School of Public Policy was submitted in May 2016. The Reviewers made a number of recommendations based on the Terms of Reference that were provided to them. Subsequently, a meeting was held with the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, the Director of the School of Public Policy and the Director of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance (VPA) to consider the recommendations. An Action Plan was prepared taking into consideration the discussion at the meeting and the External Review Report. The Action Plan has been endorsed by the School and the Dean.

Motion:

That SCUP approve and recommend to Senate the Action Plan for the School of Public Policy that resulted from its external review.

***External Review Team:**

Ken Rasmussen, University of Regina (Chair of Review Team)
 Susan Mayer, University of Chicago
 Frances Woolley, Carleton University
 Peter Hall (internal), Simon Fraser University

Attachments:

1. External Review Report (May 2016)
2. School of Public Policy Action Plan
3. School of Public Policy Educational Goals Assessment Plan

cc Jane Pulkingham, Dean, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
 Nancy Olewiler, Acting Director, School of Public Policy

**School Of Public Policy
Simon Fraser**

Report of the External Review Committee

**Ken Rasmussen, Chair, Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy,
University of Regina/University of Saskatchewan
Susan Mayer, Harris School of Pubic Policy, University of Chicago
Frances Woolley, Department of Economics, Carleton University**

Overview

This is the first external review of the School of Public Policy (SPP) at Simon Fraser University (SFU) since its inception in 2003. The Review Committee has been tasked with reflecting on the challenges and opportunities that are before the SPP in the immediate future and to comment on the quality of its programing, its faculty, students and its alumni support. The committee was also given the task of answering six specific questions. We have completed these tasks, as described in the report below, and arrived at a number of recommendations for both the SPP and the senior leadership of SFU regarding the future of SPP.

The SPP is part of wave of public policy schools developed across Canada in the last decade including the University of Calgary's School of Public Policy, the Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy operating jointly at the Universities of Saskatchewan and Regina, University of Toronto's School of Public Policy and Governance and the University of Ottawa's School of International and Public Affairs. These schools joined a number of more established policy schools that were created mostly in the 1970s. Thus there now exist a number of useful points of comparison between the SPP and its contemporaries across Canada and the US. Given that this is the first review of the SPP since its inception in 2003, it is an appropriate time to reflect on both the strengths and weakness of the existing program and opportunities for future growth and development.

Our overall impressions after two days of meetings with all stakeholders and reviewing the extensive self-study provided by the SPP is that the teaching program of the SPP is extremely popular with students and alumni. Both groups were virtually unanimous in their view that the MPP program provided them with a unique and valuable experience, gave them tremendous interaction with experienced faculty, and offered them a firm grounding that prepared them for a number of different career options. The features of the program that were most popular include its cohort model with small numbers of students entering and then graduating at the same time 20 months later, the capstone project in the second year which consists of two semesters of individual research supervised by a faculty member, and the BC priorities group projects in the first year where students work on actual policy problems that come from agencies and non-profit organizations, most of which are located in the Lower Mainland. The students considered the faculty strong and believed that they benefit from the real world experience that many faculty members have had.

Faculty members were equally supportive of the program and were comfortable with most aspects of the existing curriculum. They believe that the SFU version of the MPP degree provides depth and breath in "policy analytics", creates a strong collective feeling among the cohort, and provides students with an important opportunity to carry out in-depth research on a particular policy topic, which gives students skills that they will use throughout their career. There was some willingness to consider changes, but faculty support for

changes to the program was contingent on the maintenance of key features of the existing program. This was a sentiment echoed by students and alumni as well.

In size, SPP is smaller than many departments at SFU, with a small, dedicated faculty and one full-time staff member. Its governance structure is similar to that of an academic department, with a chair/director reporting to a line faculty Dean. It offers what some might call a “boutique” program: it provides a very high quality education, at a relatively high cost, to a relatively small group of students.

Unfortunately the features of the program that make it so popular among students, alumni and faculty, such as small classes, opportunities for research and policy experience, and extensive student-faculty interaction, cause some concern for other stakeholders at SFU. These concerns are that the MPP is perceived to be an expensive program that requires considerable University resources, it is somewhat isolated from other units with the Faculty of Arts and Social Science (FASS) and the broader SFU community, and the type of research done by some faculty members does not fit with the research aspirations of SFU.

The SPP also faces several impending challenges. The faculty is facing several retirements in the near- to medium-term and the program will need a new director immediately. The University has not given clear guidance to the faculty of SPP about how these two major challenges will be addressed.

The Review Committee was asked to address a number of generic and specific questions. In Part I of our report we examine the five generic questions and the six questions specific to the SPP posed in the Terms of Reference. However, the answers to these questions lead to a set of broader questions about the direction of the SPP and especially the financial model for supporting SPP. We address these additional questions and provide some recommendations for possible ways to address them in Part II. The recommendations come from suggestions made by faculty, alumni and SFU administrators during our visit as well as from our own experience observing other public policy programs in Canada and the US. Part III concludes the review.

Part I: Questions posed in the Terms of Reference

1. The quality of the program

The SPP offers only one degree, the MPP, in a program described as a “research intensive professional program”. By all indications the program attracts enough applicants to select high-quality students, places students well once they complete the program, and provides a high-quality educational experience during the 20-month program.

In Canada most schools of public policy have more than one degree, often a PhD program and often some executive education activity. Unlike some other policy schools, SPP does not have a special focus on a particular policy area, although there is considerable faculty

expertise in health care and Aboriginal issues, and a distinctive strength in economic policy analysis.

In Canada, there is not a settled nomenclature for Masters degrees in this area. This contrasts with the US, where Masters of Public Policy (MPP) degrees are predominantly economics based and quantitative, whereas Masters of Public Administration (MPA) degrees are more managerially focused. In Canada MPPs are less distinct from MPAs, and in many programs across Canada MPP programs have a more or less managerial focus. The orientation of SPP is clearly towards economics and quantitative approaches to public policy, what they call “policy analytics.” Unlike most other schools of public policy in Canada, the SPP does not try to bridge the policy/management divide by offering public management courses. Instead it focuses largely on policy analysis, with required courses on the economics and politics of public policy, and on methods for public policy analysis. There is one elective course offered on Public Management, but we could see no courses that touch on topics such as leadership or project management. This is itself not a problem, but it does provide opportunities for further program development, if it desires this. As it stands now SPP mainly competes with the more economics focused public policy programs like the University of Calgary’s School of Public Policy.

As noted above, the MPP was described to us as a “research intensive professional program”. The dual research+professional nature of the program is reflected in the curriculum design and course offerings. The curriculum is modeled on the Goldman School of Public Policy at UC-Berkeley, which is a well-respected program offering a curriculum that is typical in most ways of policy analysis programs in the US.

As is typically the case for professional-type masters-level public policy degrees in Canada, students admitted to SPP are assumed to have no background in economics, politics or social science research methods coming into the program, and they take a relatively large number of courses to build their basic capabilities in these areas. Unlike some other policy schools, such as Carleton’s, the SPP is relatively conservative in giving advanced standing in its economics foundations or quantitative methods courses, perhaps because of its strong commitment to the cohort model, where students take all of their courses together.

Many classes offered in the SPP are small (elective courses are capped at 15 students, and can have as few as 4 or 6 students in them), and students are required to complete a thesis-length capstone project over two semesters in the second year. In these respects, the program is more typical of research-type masters program than the course-based professional masters programs found in the rest of Canada.

Compared to most other policy programs in Canada, the SPP is relatively small in terms of enrolment. It currently enrolls around 30 students per cohort or a few less than 60 students in any one year. For example, in contrast policy program at the University of Toronto has an incoming cohort of 60 to 80 students.

While the content of the SPP is high quality, its structure poses some challenges that we discuss in Part II. In particular the delivery of the capstone is very demanding on both faculty and student time. The resource demands of the capstone prevent resources going to other potentially important curricular goals.

2. The quality of faculty research.

This was an area in which there was some concern expressed by various participants in the review process. Overall the faculty are productive scholars but with some unevenness across the ranks, with most of the high impact refereed research now coming from the junior ranks, and more of the practice, policy problem oriented research coming from senior faculty members. This will likely rebalance itself as the senior faculty are replaced by junior faculty in the next few years, but that is not guaranteed and in fact there are no tenure track appointments in the School at this point, which is in itself troubling.

There seems to have been little discussion among faculty or between faculty and SFU administration about what sort of publication and research activity are valued and expected of faculty members and there is little sense of what the research goals or benchmarks are for individual faculty members particularly for junior members of the faculty. Most policy schools place considerable importance on traditional academic publications in peer-reviewed journals as well as on policy evaluation, policy briefs and other types of practice-oriented writing. In addition to the balance between traditional academic peer reviewed publication and publications related to practice, we also note that it can be difficult to set out clearly defined research expectations in an interdisciplinary environment because publication norms and grant funds available differ so much across disciplines. Yet it is essential that more direction be provided to junior faculty as to what the expectations are for tenure and promotion in terms of appropriate venues, number of publications needed for tenure, quality of journals, impact factor, the value of tri-council research grant applications and so on.

Likewise there seemed to be no collective sense as to what the intellectual strengths of the SPP are especially as compared to other policy schools. We note strengths in tax policy, health policy and aboriginal issues. These could be more prominent markers to help distinguish and focus research activity at the SPP and could be the focus for continued engagement with other universities in the region.

The Review Committee believes that there needs to be a discussion among the faculty members of SPP to develop a statement outlining the research focus and strategy for the school. It is our view that this discussion should encourage and value some balance between traditional academic scholarships in peer reviewed journals, books and other venues and more practitioner focused and “engaged” research.

3. Unit members’ participation in administration.

First, it is important to acknowledge the exceptional efforts of Nancy Olewiler and other faculty members who conceived of and established the SPP. However, some concern was expressed that not all faculty members are as engaged in the committee work of the SPP as you would like to see and is necessary in such a small unit. For example, issues around admissions committee activity were one example where there were disproportional burdens on the part of some faculty members. It did seem that there was some scope for reducing the amount of work associated with the admissions process – by, for example, having the exceptionally strong and exceptionally weak applications reviewed by just one person, rather than the whole admissions committee. However a greater effort from all faculty members to engage in the important work of the school was seen as one area where improvement was needed.

As was noted in the self-study, many faculty members only have 50 percent appointments in SPP and thus have more restricted commitments to the program. The director and faculty of SPP would benefit by developing a collective understanding of what the expected administrative load is for faculty members with various kinds of appointments.

4. Workplace environment.

The intellectual and personal environment of SPP seems to be very good. Faculty and the one staff member seem to have a congenial and collegial relationships and students seem satisfied. It appears that this is a very harmonious unit in which there is a great deal of respect for one another and little by way of division and personal discord. The same thing cannot be said of all departments within any university and this is something that makes it a very effective unit and is a feature that is important for any new director to work hard to maintain.

There are considerable opportunities for the SPP to become more engaged with other units at SFU, particularly other professional program such as International Studies and Urban Studies, both of which were brought up on various occasion in our deliberations as potential partners. Based on our interviews we believe that there is a real willingness to engage in more collaboration with other units at the University, especially those that share a similar mission and focus on similar topics such as health policy and aboriginal policy. However, cross unit collaboration often requires leadership at the university level, appropriately structured incentives, and may require more staff effort than is now possible with the extremely small staff of the policy program.

One thing that is missing is greater engagement with other units in terms of associate or adjunct faculty status. Most policy schools have strong relations with other units on their home campus, and have other faculty engaged in teaching. Indeed many of these schools have a very small full-time faculty, but then have associated faculty who teach in the program from a variety of other programs and disciplines across campus. The University of Toronto School of Public Policy and Governance, in which every associated full-time faculty member has a 49 percent or less appointment to the School, is an example of how this

model can work effectively. Building relationships with allied units would be one way to help deal with impending retirements in the short to medium term.

Engagement with the community. The primary program that engages the policy community aside from the CPPR is the BC priorities project that is undertaken in the first year of each cohort over two semesters by groups of 5 students. This is an excellent form of engagement, but it appears to be the main program offered by the SPP. This program sees students working with organizations as diverse as Translink and StreetToHome Foundation as well as various government ministries.

It would be difficult for the SPP to be more engaged given its limited resources, and the institutional structures within which it operates. If SFU wants the SPP to be more engaged it will need to change the incentive structure by allowing SPP to accumulate resources from external activities, providing support in the early years of such a transformation, and provide the SPP with a mandate to develop its endowments, research chairs and pursue other fundraising opportunities.

Engagement with alumni. This program has a devoted and dedicated alumni group and it is a testament to the SPP that so many of them wish to remain engaged the school and have ongoing opportunities to stay engaged. Some alumni mentioned that they would like to see SPP provide some professional development opportunities for alumni. This would both foster greater alumni relations and greater community engagement.

5. Future plans are appropriate and manageable.

At the moment the SPP does not have a strategic plan and it is operating under considerable uncertainty making planning very difficult. While there is a FASS strategic plan, it too is more or less silent on what its ambitions are for the SPP. Thus it is not surprising that there are few concrete plans to the future. In addition, faculty, students and alumni all strongly endorse the status quo. Although Nancy Olewiler, with the support of other faculty members, has been developing a proposal to create undergraduate course offerings, the Review Committee did not detect any other plans for growth, new programming, or new partnerships. We return to many of these issues in Part II.

6. Issues of specific interest to the University and /or the Unit that the Review Committee should consider during the review

6.1 What measures would improve the quality of the MPP and the competitive position of the School relative to other similar programs in Canada

The SPP now attracts enough applicants to be able to select high-quality students and it also seems able to place graduating students in jobs that students enjoy and in which they excel. The program itself, as noted, is of high quality. Its small size may be a competitive

advantage or disadvantage. Sometimes small programs do not have enough visibility to be competitive but sometime small programs are in high demand because they are small.

Over time the SPP has faced, and will continue to face, increased competition from a number of Canadian programs, mostly in Ontario that are increasing their enrolment and appear to have more money for scholarship and other forms of student support. Canada's demographics also creates a challenge for the SPP. The number of people in the 20-24 age group in Canada will be declining for the next several years. Moreover, the young adult population is becoming increasingly diverse, and the SPP does not have a strong track record in terms of recruiting a demographically diverse student body – a point we will return to below. Increasing competition for a declining number of students nation-wide creates a challenging recruiting situation, and recent minor declines in applications may indicate a trend in this direction.

At the same time, the overall demand for students with an MPP appears to be growing. If the Canadian market follows the US market, over the next 10 years or so students with a high-quality MPP degree will be in a solid competitive position with graduates of business schools for many jobs in the public and private sectors and the demand for students with public policy degrees will equal or surpass the demand for students with degrees in urban planning, public health and other related fields. Thus at the moment the prediction for the future is very positive for public policy programs in general.

We note that faculty report that SPP is not competitive in terms of financial aid to students. Faculty report losing very promising admitted students to other universities that have offered the students more financial aid. In some other policy schools, such as Carleton's, a student admitted into a Masters degrees may be awarded a TA as part of their funding package, and then assigned as a TA to courses in units with large undergraduate programs, such as economics or political science. At SFU, however, it appears that TAs are only available in units with undergraduate programs, pointing to a possible connection between the competitive position of the MPP program, and the scope of the SPP's undergraduate and other activities, which we will discuss further below.

We also note that the SPP has almost no funds or staff to dedicate to student recruitment or even to improving its web page and more actively engaging in social media. Because these are the main tools for student recruitment, not investing in this area will leave SPP at a competitive disadvantage.

6.2 Assess the current configuration of faculty, core course and electives and comment on whether this is the most effective way of achieving maximum teaching effectiveness and program sustainability?

The size of the faculty seems more or less appropriate for the current size of the program. However there appear to be no tenure track faculty members in the program and a number of tenured faculty members will be retiring in the short- to medium-term. Thus

there is considerable uncertainty about the size and composition of faculty complement in the future. This is clearly an issue that requires immediate attention.

The curriculum is based on that of the highly respected Goldman School of Public Policy at the University of California, Berkeley and it closely mirrors that program in content with one exception. The exception is the length and intensity of the capstone project in which students are asked to identify a policy problem and through close mentorship with a faculty member, thoroughly research the topic and develop policy-relevant conclusions about a solution to the problem. While many if not most policy schools, including the Goldman School, require a capstone project, few are as long as the SPP capstone and few require such individualized faculty mentorship. Because these aspects of the capstone program are the main curricular deviations from other policy programs and in particular from the curriculum on which the SPP is modeled, and because it is very resource intensive, we will discuss these aspects of the curriculum in more detail in Part II.

6.3 Would the sustainability and effectiveness of the School be improved if it diversified to include additional programs such as an Executive MPP, and/or professional development programs, offered on a cost-recovery basis?

The Review Committee members believe that the SPP could benefit from some broader engagement in these or similar activities. Executive MPP programs as well as other executive education and professional development programs are common elements of many policy programs. Initiatives like these can be an important source of revenue, but they can also provide visibility and influence for the program and provide new opportunities for faculty members and students. Given the size of the local metropolitan area alone with over 2.3 million people, the attractive nature of Vancouver as a destination for those from other parts of Canada, and its strategic focus on Asia, we felt that some tentative steps in this direction have a high probability of success.

As we discuss below the SPP is not currently staffed or otherwise resourced to pursue these activities. Therefore without additional resources and guidance from SFU, it will be impossible for the SPP to pursue opportunities like these. Moving into these new areas is risky and it is not unusual for new programs to take a couple of years to become self-sufficient. The Review Committee observed support for moving in this direction from the faculty and staff.

We believe that there is a high probability that new commitments from SFU to support executive and professional training would be repaid both financially and in terms of the visibility and stature of the university.

6.4 Should the School expand its yearly MPP cohort from 30 to 40 or more MPP students by increasing first year class sizes (and thus with no change in the number of faculty or instructors)

The members of the Review Committee believe that it is possible to increase the size of the program to 40 students without dramatically changing the structure of the program. Such an increase would probably require changes in the capstone project. However the Review Committee is of the view that changes in the delivery of the capstone project are desirable in any event. We discuss such changes in Part II below.

Yet “could” does not imply “should”. The financial and pedagogical impacts of an expansion in the MPP cohort depend critically upon how the expanded cohort is accommodated within the eight required first year courses. There would be a clear financial gain from admitting more students, and expanding the class sizes in the first year courses from 30 to 40 students. However a class of 40 can be quite different from a class of 30 in terms of the dynamics of professor-student interaction, and the marking/evaluation load for faculty.

Therefore increasing the cohort size will require a clear analysis of potential impacts. For example, what are the likely pedagogical impacts from increasing the cohort to 40 students (and hence total students to close to 80)? What adjustments might be made to minimize any detrimental effects of such an increase? For example, could giving more students advanced standing in the core courses alleviate some of the burden of the increased class size? Are instructors willing to move from 30 to 40 students per class? Alternatively, it might be possible to accommodate a cohort of 40 by dividing each of the eight core first year classes into two sections of 20 students each. Then it must be asked: would an expansion under these conditions make sense financially? Pedagogically? An expanded MPP cohort would also require additional administrative staff and changes in student recruitment to assure an adequate application pool. Expansion in enrolment would put pressure on internship placements, but this potentially could be managed with support from the SFUs Co-op office, or by admitting some part-time students who might not require an internship.

It is clear that expansion is possible, and would have many benefits. We note that the program that SPP is based on, the Goldman School at UC Berkley, takes in 91 students per year (it gets 700 applications a year). No one would suggest that SPP move toward that number anytime soon, but extending it to 40 or perhaps even 50 students with some alteration in the curriculum would increase tuition revenue and provide important opportunities for increasing diversity in the student body. When the program started it proposed to start just 20 students per year and has now has grown to a cohort of 30. It is our view that the application pool is strong and can become stronger with more effective marketing and recruitment, and that a move to 40 students should be seriously considered.

We therefore recommend that the SPP develop a business plan for the expansion of the MPP program, and discuss with the appropriate people how the revenues from such an expansion would be shared between the SPP and the University, and where the resources required to implement an expansion would come from. The SPP is in the enviable position

of having many possible ways to expand its programming and other activities, and it needs to set priorities. If the SPP were to develop new programs in the area of mid-career education and executive education, these new programs might well offset the need to grow the MPP enrolment.

6.5 Given that the current Director's term expires in a little over a year, how can the recruitment of a recognized policy scholar and leader be expedited to ensure the very best candidate is recruited?

Of all the specific questions asked of the external Review Committee this is perhaps the most important for both the SPP and senior leaders at SFU.

What it will take to recruit the best possible new director depends crucially on SFU's expectations about the future of SPP. We discuss this issue at greater length below, but given the current small size of the program, uncertainties about the size and composition of the faculty in the short and medium term, the constrained administrative staff (see below) and the lack of guidance and leadership from SFU about the direction of SPP, it will be very difficult to attract anyone other than an individual within SFU who is willing to act as a director. A position that provides little opportunity to build the SPP through independent fundraising activities, or to act as an "academic entrepreneur" developing new programming initiatives, is unlikely to be attractive to top candidates. To attract a "recognized policy scholar and leader" will require making the job one that such an individual would like to take. This will mean providing institutional support for making changes in the program, expanding the program, increasing the visibility of the program, and creating appropriate incentive structures. Thus, before beginning a search for a new Director, the University must first decide on its level of commitment to the existing program or to changing that program.

If the goal is to conduct a full-scale national search for a senior policy leader there will need to be some thought given to what the SPP is to become, how many resources will be provided to it, how much autonomy will be granted and what specific role a new director is expected to play in aspects of the SPP including fund raising and external and community relations.

6.6 Is the School meeting expectations in its support of SFU's vision to be Canada's leading engaged university?

It would be difficult to say that the SPP is falling below expectations for engagement overall given its small size and we note that many faculty members are very actively engaged in policy practice. What it does in this area appears to be well regarded and effective. However SPP has the opportunity for a more systematic and strategic focus on engagement and SFU has the opportunity to promote the many things that SPP does do to provide great visibility to both SFU and SPP. Its location in Vancouver creates distance from both the federal government in Ottawa and the provincial government in Victoria, making it challenging to maintain close connections with federal and provincial governments. The SPP compensates for this with strong connections with municipal

governments and First Nations, but it might consider ways to further leverage its downtown Vancouver location to create a high profile in the business community, or build trans-Pacific or other international partnerships.

Overall SPP it does not have the high profile that it should, and its external relations appears somewhat ad hoc. SPP faculty have a variety of contacts with aboriginal communities, and with health policy activity especially around the issues of HIV. The two major research institutes are the Centre for Public Policy (CPPR) the Adaptation to Climate Change Team (ACCT) lead by Deborah Hartford. The CPPR does a good deal of self-directed and has a good recorded research reports. It also coordinates the Policy Spotlight series, which is the major vehicle for engagement with the academic and policy community. The centre coordinates conferences for the school and appears to do this with little or no budget. The other unit is the ACCT which seems to have a lot of activity going on, is successful in external fund raising, but this unit does not seem to have the profile within the SPP that it appears to deserve given both the subject matter, the broader interest in this subject in the community and the activity that the Centre generates. More effort could be devoted to the promoting and ongoing engagement with this unit and the overall research agenda of the SPP.

The Review Committee is not aware of an advisory board to SPP made up of key policy advisors, an on-going speaker series, strategic use of social media, a strategic communications or community engagement plan. Policy schools often have ongoing relations with senior government and corporate leaders in their jurisdiction, and leaders from various levels of government and from different types of administrative structures are regularly providing speeches, invited to seminars, and so on. We did not hear about such on-going programs at SPP.

However, as we note below it would be impossible for SPP to create and maintain these important forms of engagement given its current level of administrative support. It also seems to lack support from SFU for playing a key role in engaging external constituents. This is surprising because at many universities the policy school plays exactly that role because its subject matter, alumni and faculty all lend themselves to this role. What the SPP currently does with its limited resources has been good and of a high quality, but a fully resourced SPP could not only live up to SFU's vision for an engaged university but could become a leader in this effort. However, it requires both that the SPP and the University leadership are in agreement on this goal and how to achieve it and measure it.

Part II: Additional observation and recommendations of the Review Committee

1. Specific issues and recommendations related to the curriculum. Perhaps the most pressing issue related to the curriculum is the capstone project. The capstone is currently an integral and much liked aspect of the curriculum. It is also the part of the curriculum that is most unlike the curriculum of most other policy schools and it is the most labor-

intensive part of the curriculum. Because the capstone project is labor intensive for both students and faculty it is useful to think of it in terms of trade-offs.

Because the capstone consumes so much teaching time it means that faculty have no time to teach undergraduate courses. Teaching undergraduate courses would alleviate some of financial strain on the SPP. It might also engage faculty with a broader number of students in SFU, which might result in the university feeling that the program is better integrated in the university.

Because the capstone consumes so much of students' time and energy, students take fewer electives than they might wish to take. This combined with the large number of electives that SPP offers leads to many very small elective classes. This too contributes to financial strain on the program.

The intensity of the capstone makes it difficult to expand the size of the SPP program even modestly to 40 students. As we have noted expansion would have many benefits: it would allow a more diverse student body and it would increase the number of students in electives, making these more cost effective.

We recommend that the SPP consider several possible changes to the capstone project. Some of these recommendations were suggested by faculty members or alumni. Others we have observed in other public policy programs.

a. Replace the current supervisory structure for the capstone project with a capstone seminar. At present, every faculty member receives one course credit for every five capstone projects supervised. While all of the students supervised by one particular faculty member have weekly seminars, the size of these seminars is not comparable to a typical graduate seminar. The Review Committee was of the view that scheduling the capstone as a regular seminar would have pedagogical and administrative advantages, as well as using faculty time more efficiently. On the administrative side, the School's administrator would no longer have to schedule individual defenses for every single capstone project, as these defenses could be replaced by some form of in-class presentation. From a pedagogical point of view, in a course setting students tend to have structured deadlines for submitting, for example, their literature review, their first draft, and so on, which tends to boost completion rates. The seminar approach to individual projects is a common model not only in policy programs but in other masters level and undergraduate programs that emphasize individual research projects.

b. Reduce the maximum length of the capstone project. The maximum length for the capstone project is, at present, 18,000 words. Reports of this length are rare in professional practice - or indeed in academic scholarship, where journal articles are more likely to be between 6,000 and 7,000 words. It is important for students to learn how to choose what is important and what is not and how to write a focused,

succinct and pointed report. Hence for pedagogical reasons - as well as resourcing ones - we would encourage a shorter and more focused capstone project with a maximum length in the 6,000 to 10,000 word range

Replacing the current capstone project structure with a capstone seminar, and reducing the maximum project length would be beneficial for the majority of the School's graduates, as most go on to careers in government or the non-profit sector. However a small but non-trivial number of the School's graduates do go on to complete PhDs or do other research intensive work. If the suggestions above for shortening the capstone project and delivering it through a seminar are implemented, it might be useful for SPP to consider introducing a research stream, which would allow more research-oriented students to complete a thesis.

2. Other recommendations relative to the curriculum

- a. Offer fewer electives.** The way the MPP is structured at present, students take all of their core required courses in first year, and all of their electives in second year. Elective courses are offered, for an average elective class size of $30 \times 4/9 = 13$ students. However, because there is only one cohort of students taking electives at any one time, some electives end up with only four or six students in them, while other electives are over-subscribed. One way to save resources while maintaining the current range of course offerings is to offer the less popular electives every other year. In order to make this work, however, the curriculum would have to be adjusted to create room for students to take electives in the first year of the program. Again the Goldman School at Berkeley could provide a model here, as it allows students to take electives in both the first and second year of the program, as do virtually all other policy programs in the US.

- b. Re-consider delivery of basic/remedial material.** The MPP program accepts students with a wide variety of undergraduate backgrounds, including the humanities and natural sciences, as well as the social sciences. In order to work as policy practitioners, these students need to learn basic, undergraduate-level concepts in economics, politics, quantitative methods and qualitative methods, and then be brought up to a level where they can apply these concepts in a sophisticated and thoughtful way. The Reviewers Committee suggest that SPP consider alternative ways to deliver some of the basic or remedial material - for example, supply and demand analysis, elementary statistics. For example, it is common for public policy schools to require students to take basic economics (Economics 1000) prior to admission, or during the first term of their studies (in the economic department). Many programs require students to take basic calculus courses before enrolling. Many programs recommend on-line courses or suggest upper-level university courses for students to take. Alternatively, course could be delivered in a blended learning format, with students accessing basic materials and lectures on-line, to free up class-room time for problem solving, discussion, policy

applications, and so on. It is also worth noting it may not be necessary to deliver basic materials to all incoming students. Many policy programs, such as the masters program in public policy at Carleton University, are fairly aggressive about giving students credit for material completed as an undergraduate - so, for example, a student with an undergraduate degree in economics would not be required to complete the economics course at the masters level. It would be worth investigating other programs to see if SFU's practice in this area is in line with that elsewhere.

- c. **Reconsider the restriction of co-op placements to the summer term.** The SFU MPP is delivered through a cohort model. Every student in a given cohort starts at the same time, every student studies full time, and - to an impressive degree - every student finishes at more-or-less the same time. This model of program delivery has many strengths - we were particularly impressed by the degree of cohesion within the program, and the excellent completion rates. It also has costs. In particular, the requirement that all co-op placements be completed in the summer semester seriously restricts the co-op opportunities available to students. Many employers have a greater volume of work, and thus greater need for co-op students, in the Fall and Spring semesters. Some employers create semi-permanent co-op positions - i.e. they have a single position which is filled with a continuous stream of co-op students. Other employers prefer to have co-op students available for longer, i.e. eight- to 12-month placements. In short, there are at least as many co-op opportunities available in the Fall and Spring as there are in the Summer. The expansion in the number of masters program across the country, and a greater awareness of the value of internships and co-op placements, means that the competition for available co-op placements is becoming increasingly tight. Over the medium- to long-term, the SFU School of Public Policy may wish to consider whether or not it is worth trading off some elements of their current program design in order to create the flexibility that would allow students to take advantage of a greater range of co-op opportunities.
- d. **Introduce undergraduate course offerings.** If some of the changes described above were introduced, it would free up sufficient resources so that the SPP faculty could offer some undergraduate courses in public policy, which might help with concerns about the cost of the program, particularly in light of SFUs budget model which privileges undergraduate teaching. We found support among the faculty for doing more undergraduate teaching; indeed, Professor Nancy Olewiler is currently actively investigating this possibility. Undergraduate courses can be used to recruit applicants. For example, it might be possible to fast-track students who have completed a certain number of undergraduate courses. Undergraduate courses are also useful for increasing the visibility of public policy as a career option.
- e. **Map educational goals to curriculum.** The School should create a map between the program's educational goals and its curriculum. This mapping exercise should allow the School to identify any redundant parts of the curriculum, any educational

goals, which are not sufficiently supported, and deliberate on alternative ways of achieving educational goals.

To reiterate we believe that by reducing scope of the capstone, and/or reducing the number of electives, the SPP could provide some “service” teaching or even a post baccalaureate diploma of some sort to supplement the costs of running the program. Given the nature of the budget system at SFU, which is skewed in favour of undergraduate enrolments, this could help alleviate the concerns of senior management regarding the school’s over all budget allocation and revenue/expenditure structure as well as providing additional opportunities to improve the overall program.

3. Observations and recommendations on the diversity of the student population

The Review Committee was struck by the lack of diversity among the student body or an enrolment plan that might try to encourage more diversity. There are almost no international students, and few aboriginal/First Nations students in the program. This is something that is probably worth greater discussion within SPP with some consideration given on how to bring diverse voices to the SPP experience. It could be that the perception of the MPP as a path to a job in government may be a barrier to attracting a diverse student body, as recent immigrants who do not yet have Canadian citizenship status are at a disadvantage when it comes to being recruited for federal government jobs, hence may be less likely to be attracted to a degree that is seem to be oriented towards the public sector. As noted earlier, in the US students with a high-quality MPP degree are in a solid competitive position with graduates of business schools private sector positions, and we believe that graduates of the SPP have skills and knowledge that are valuable in the private sector. Positioning the MPP as a degree with private-sector relevance could well make it more attractive to a broad range of students, and thereby allow the SPP to build a more diverse students population. We also note that alumni of SPP hold jobs in the NGO sector and some go on to study for a Ph.D. so there are already many options other than government for students.

4. Observations and recommendations on SFU support for the SPP program

SFU provides relatively low level of investment, guidance and leadership to SPP. SPP is operating with considerable uncertainty regarding it faculty and its place in the University including its role in fund raising for SPP and with very constrained administrative resources. It is impossible for a program to be forward looking and entrepreneurial under these circumstances. There appears to be a stand-off in which the University is waiting for the faculty to develop plans for the future that are agreeable to it while the faculty is awaiting commitments form the university that are agreeable to it. However, it is up to the leadership of SFU to initiate discussions with the leadership of the SPP to mutually develop a strategic plan for the both the short an long term.

It should be noted that the current SFU funding model creates serious challenges for the SPP. We understand that SFU’s financial incentives for units are based on a “100 percent

butts on seats” model – that is, units receive funding based on the number of undergraduate students they teach. It seems to us that such a funding model could potentially be problematic for the SPP, as the school has no undergraduate offerings. Moreover, while “butts on seats” funding would appear to encourage the growth of undergraduate offerings at the SPP, it also creates incentives for existing units to block new, and potentially competitive, course offerings. Put another way, if any new SPP undergraduate programming does not bring in new students, but rather takes students (and therefore funding) away from other units, it can expect to face some resistance from said units. Here senior administration has a role to play in fostering a climate that rewards collaboration between units, and facilitates the development of new programming initiatives in the SPP.

It should also be noted that the SPP is under-resourced in terms of administrative staff. This undermines its ability to do the basic tasks of student recruitment and communication and completely forestalls planning for any new initiatives. The SPP has a very competent support “team” which consists of one full time manager and one part time co-op and community engagement officer (appointed to the co-op office). This is an extremely small staff and it is clearly the smallest staff of any policy school in Canada by a wide margin. Such a small staff means that the program misses many opportunities. For example, the web site and communications efforts currently suffer because of lack of staff time to attend to them and these are key functions for any major growth initiatives. This potentially reduces the quality, quantity and diversity of the applicant pool at a minimum. It also reduces the visibility of the program in the community and therefore is a loss to the SFUs overall visibility. The lack of visibility in turn reduces fund raising potential, further straining the financial situation of the program. While such a small staff might be barely appropriate for the current configuration of the SPP it does mean that many opportunities for effective promotion, fundraising and other engagement activities are missed.

SFUs lack of commitment to the SPP regarding faculty staffing levels even in the near future is not only demoralizing for the SPP faculty, it also prevents any kind of strategic planning or entrepreneurship in terms of programing. It is certainly not usual for a graduate program within a strong university to have so little information about the future of its faculty. Furthermore SFUs lack on commitment to the SPP will make hiring a new director who is anything other than a caretaker extremely difficult.

We recommend that the SFU leadership work with the SPP leadership to immediately develop a five-year strategic plan with commitments from both groups to a sustainable financial model, an number of faculty in appropriate classifications, and with the role of the new director clearly articulated.

III. Conclusion:

The Review Committee is of the view that SPP is a very good program, which has a great deal of support from internal stakeholders and produces very solid outcomes for students, alumni and employers. The faculty are committed to the current approach and feel that they can address concerns emerging from SFU's budgeting model by beginning to deliver more undergraduate teaching. While there was some support for additional major changes, this support was contingent on SFU leadership providing new resources and faculty renewal commitments, along with a new mandate but always with the assumption that the character of the current program can be maintained.

The option favoured by the stakeholders within the SPP then is to maintain the current program, but engage in more undergraduate teaching as a way of providing more support to the University and bringing their budget metrics more in line with other departmental units within the FASS. This is an option that could continue for many years so long as other units and departments provide the support and opportunities for their students to take these new public policy undergraduate offerings. Given that SFU has other high cost and high quality programs like this, there is no fundamental reason that they should not continue to keep the program as it is with some minor changes in the curriculum and a small increase in enrolment. Indeed most graduate programs are high cost, and that alone is no reason that any university should abandon them.

In the end, the feeling on the part of the Review Committee was that the choice of the status quo would be to miss a strategic opportunity to expand the program into different areas, take on a greater role in executive education, and provide greater opportunity for non-traditional students and mid-career students to further their careers though attending the SPP. Given the way that policy schools at most other universities operate, with a broader range of engagement activities, a greater array of graduate programming including more than one masters degree and joint programs with other units, online programs, mid-career programs, PhD programs and so on, there exist many possible futures for the SPP should the faculty wish to take them. We do not suggest which array of actives be embraced, only that for the ongoing survival of the program into the future, the SPP should begin to at least look toward the idea of taking on more of the attributes of a traditional policy school. This does not mean it should abandon its flagship MPP, only that they consider other program options, such as other professional programs.

To move in this direction however does mean that changes in governance will need to occur and that new resources and a new mandate to pursue new options will be forthcoming from the FASS and the University. The status quo is always an option, and based on our review is an option that students, alumni and faculty would be comfortable with. The status quo or some minor changes to the status quo we outlined earlier in this report would continue to provide great opportunities to the students who benefit greatly from this high quality program. However it would be better if more students were trained,

more employers and governments engaged, and more faculty members across the SFU community had an opportunity to participate in this program as joint members or associate faculty. SFU has real jewel in the MPP program at the SPP and any transformation will need to be done in a thoughtful manner that does not harm what is a proven and much beloved model. But universities are under pressure to expand quality professional program offerings, attract new international and domestic students and raise additional funds through various engagement activities. It seems to us that the SPP could do all of these things if there is willingness on the part of all stakeholders both internal and external. The dilemma then is not solely with the lack of appetite for change and growth among the current students, alumni and faculty, but rather the built into the structure mandate and nature of the autonomy that the SPP has. As such any major change will require a new form of governance, with new commitments and mandates.

In our answers and recommendations we point out that much depends on which route the university wishes to take regarding the future of the SPP. On the one hand it is possible to make relatively minor changes in the current program to address issues related to costs and to the quality and quantity of research produced by the faculty. An alternative is to make more substantial changes to the program that would make SPP a more outward facing and integral part of the SFU mission.

At the heart of this report then is a dilemma that repeatedly cropped up during the course of our review. On the one hand the current program seems to be very good, the program is well liked by all internal stakeholders, is modeled after a very respectable program (Goldman School) and it is similar to many other policy programs except for the research-intensive capstone and it seems to attract and produce good students. On the other hand, all of this comes at a cost.

This is a difficult dilemma to resolve and while the Review Committee believes that there is nothing innately wrong with a small boutique program subsidized by the University if everyone agrees that this is what the program is to be and is going to be for the foreseeable future. Most universities have such programs for one reason or another and in fact almost all PhD programs are like this. However, if the administrative leadership of SFU is not happy with the status quo, there are two possible options. The first is to tweak the existing program in ways that reduce costs. For example, reduce the number of electives and use some of that teaching credit to staff undergraduate courses is one option we addressed earlier. A more substantial and radical alternative is to abandon the idea of a boutique program and create an entrepreneurial school of public policy like those seen around the world and in other parts of Canada. The latter reform would however require a complete recommitment and reorientation of the University leadership towards the SPP.

EXTERNAL REVIEW – ACTION PLAN

Section 1 – To be completed by the Responsible Unit Person e.g. Chair or Director

Unit under review	Date of Review Site visit	Responsible Unit person (s)	Faculty Dean
School of Public Policy	April 5-6, 2016	Doug McArthur & N. Olewiler	Jane Pulkingham

Notes

1. It is ***not*** expected that every recommendation made by the Review Team be covered by this Action Plan. The major thrusts of the Report should be identified and some consolidation of the recommendations may be possible while other recommendations of lesser importance may be excluded.
2. Attach the required plan to assess the success of the ***Educational Goals*** as an addendum (Senate 2013).
3. Should any additional response be warranted, it should be attached as a separate document.

1. PROGRAMMING

1.1 Action/s (description what is going to be done):

1.1.1 Undergraduate:

- Exploration of one or more undergraduate course offerings in public policy was initiated in Spring 2016 in consultation with the Dean's office. SPP has secured a TLC grant to undertake a review of public policy course offerings at other universities to examine their scope, pedagogy, and any innovative delivery approaches. SPP will meet with SFU faculty in departments that offer policy-related courses or might be interested in seeing a course developed for their students to help assess demand for the course and ensure the course(s) would serve the university interests. Public policy analysis combines multiple disciplines – e.g., economics, political science, research methods, and will not duplicate any existing courses. As a multi-disciplinary course in the foundations and application of public policy analysis, it will appeal to students from any discipline and will seek designation as a breadth, writing, and numeracy course as all three are integral to policy analysis. The intention is that undergraduate offerings not simply draw students away from other courses or programs. They must meet a real demand on the part of students.
- In consultation with the Dean's office, discussion of a potential post-baccalaureate diploma (the PBD) is also in the beginning stages. The PBD would involve multiple SFU departments, packaging a group of courses including new SPP undergraduate courses that provide those with undergraduate degrees in any discipline an introduction to policy analysis. The degree would help position students for entry level jobs in the private and public sector and not-for-profits as well as help provide courses that better prepare those interested in a graduate degree.

1.1.2 Graduate:

- The Review Committee states that for our students the “MPP program provided them with a unique and valuable experience, gave them tremendous interaction with experienced faculty, and offered them a firm grounding that prepared them for a number of different career options”. They deem the MPP program a “high-quality educational experience”. The Review Committee noted the exceptional accolades from our current students and alumni who expressed their gratitude to their professors and staff and for the preparation the program gave them for their careers. The Committee’s recommendations focus on areas to help improve efficiency in program delivery while preserving the high quality of the instruction and outcomes. The major areas include the Capstone project (the major research project required for the degree), offering of elective courses, the size of the intake into each cohort, and remedial instruction. We do not agree with any suggestions to reduce the research and analysis intensity of the program. The analytical capacity of our students is one of our core strengths and key attractant for prospective students.
- *Capstone project:* The Review Committee suggested actions to improve efficiencies that include reducing the length of the capstone, delivering the advanced policy analysis sequence using fewer faculty resources, and offering two ways to complete the research project requirement. The SPP will undertake the following actions to address these recommendations. The capstone will be reduced from 20,000 words down to a maximum of 15,000 words (12,000 words minimum). A review will be undertaken of the teaching approach and supervision to deliver the same learning outcomes and quality and additional modifications will be made accordingly. With the reduction in the length of the capstone and other changes, the SPP will increase slightly the number of students per faculty supervisor, thus freeing up resources for the potential undergraduate courses and other initiatives that the SPP undertakes. As part of the proposed changes, the capstone course entitled Advanced Policy Analysis (PLCY 808) will be delivered in a structured lecture and interactive mode whereby the faculty instructors review the core methodological framework for the capstone and address research questions and challenges (such as Ethics approval). This will improve student understanding of the policy research process and help increase consistency in expectations and performance.

The Capstone project meets SFU’s requirements for a master’s degree. It falls under SFU’s GRR 1.7.2 as a project with an external examiner and scheduled defence. The capstone is integral to the research component of our project and is crucial in SPP’s designation as a ‘research department’. With this designation, our students are eligible for graduate fellowships and SSHRC awards. In addition, a number of students apply for and receive research funding from other agencies and entities. Examples are PICS (Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions) fellowship awards, government agencies (e.g., Environment Canada), research institutes (e.g., St. Paul’s HIV-AIDs, ACT, Sustainable Prosperity), NGOs. As well, some of our students have been part of multi-disciplinary research groups (e.g., with SFU’s Earth Sciences department, Faculty of Health Sciences) where their capstone research was the policy component of major research grants. The capstone provides students with skills they carry into the workplace and allows those interested to secure admission to PhD programs. Reducing the capstone to a course-based paper would eliminate access to these important sources of funding for our students, diminish their educational

experience, and make it extremely challenging, if not impossible, to achieve the SPP's learning goals.

- *Elective courses:* The SPP will optimize the delivery of elective courses to ensure that the university's course enrollment objectives for graduate programs are met.
- *Cohort size:* Under the provincial framework for graduate funding, the financial benefit to SFU of increasing the intake into each cohort is the incremental tuition revenue (i.e., no incremental provincial grant per student as SFU is beyond its maximum allocation). Discussions with the Dean's office to date have noted that the physical constraints at Harbour Centre (classrooms, computer lab) would require two sections of core courses and thus more faculty resources, offsetting tuition revenue gains. Increasing enrollment beyond our current target of 30 students thus does not appear to lead to an increase in net revenue to the university.
- *Remedial instruction:* Applicants with significant deficiencies in the core disciplinary subjects of public policy are typically denied admission to the program and advised to take undergraduate courses in those areas where they are deficient (economics, political science, research methods) before reapplying. For admitted students we will continue to strongly recommend the completion of online courses that address the area where they have less than adequate background.
- *Educational Goals:* The SPP has established its program level learning objectives and will map these into course specific goals as per the directives established at SFU. We have established a working group to identify any redundant parts of the curriculum, and any educational goals that are not sufficiently supported through the existing curriculum. More efficient approaches to achieving the specified educational goals will be explored. We attach the latest draft of the educational goals for SPP.
- *Program Diversity:* A working group has been established to study approaches for attracting qualified international students who have the necessary backgrounds, language, and analytical capacity to succeed in the program. A market that has significant potential is the United States. Implications for curriculum development, and promotion, and advertising will be explored. The SPP strongly supports Aboriginal policy analysis with applications in its core courses, an elective in Aboriginal Policy, and the research agendas of a number of our faculty. Through personal contacts, we recruit Aboriginal students and have had enrollment in proportion to the population of Aboriginal students with bachelor (or equivalent) degrees. We welcome and encourage partnerships with FASS units to encourage more Aboriginal students to pursue graduate studies.
- The need to maintain a strong *competitive position* relative to other programs in Canada is a continuing concern. The reputation of the School continues to develop. Communication strategies to reach prospective students will be given more emphasis. Faculty will be encouraged to maintain a strong presence in the policy community and to emphasize the association with the School in professional and academic work. Additional scholarships are needed to make offers to students more competitive; a matter that will receive on-going attention.
- The renewal of the *Advisory Committee* will be undertaken following a review of its role and terms of reference.

- The School will continue with periodic speakers and conferences as part of its *engagement strategy* as time and resources permit, bridging where possible to FASS and university wide leadership and initiatives.

1.2 Resource implications (if any):

- Capstone restructuring and a modest increase in supervisory load can allow for potential undergraduate teaching and other training initiatives. Undergraduate public policy teaching will thus be from existing faculty resources if faculty numbers are maintained.
- Optimization of elective course offerings can allow for potential undergraduate teaching and other training initiatives.
- A post-baccalaureate diploma program would bring in additional financial resources to FASS.
- Attracting international students will require promotion and advertising budget and staff supports.
- Delivery of undergraduate courses will require TA funding for tutorials.
- Efforts will continue with the FASS development staff to develop additional financial assistance for students in order to advance the competitive position of the School.

1.3 Expected completion date/s:

- The exploration of potential undergraduate offerings began in the spring semester of 2016 and will be completed by Spring 2017. If approved by FASS and the university, the first course(s) would be slated for spring 2018 (as per discussions with the Dean's office).
- Changes to the capstone word count and organization of PLCY 808 will be implemented in 2016-17 and 2017-18.
- Changes in the supervisory load will be undertaken in Fall 2017 as assignments have already been made for 2016-17.
- The admission process for 2016-17 will indicate to prospective students the availability of online courses to address specific gaps in their backgrounds.
- Mapping of educational goals will be completed during the 2016-17 academic year.
- A renewed Advisory Committee will be in place by Fall 2017.

2. RESEARCH

2.1 Action/s (what is going to be done):

- *Research strength:* Ways to better articulate and communicate the SPP's research capacity and strength to external communities is the focus of a renewed department working group on research. Immediate action is to require faculty to enhance their individual web pages (with the development of a department-designed web template) to describe the depth and breadth of policy and research initiatives. This will include: active research projects and initiatives, grant funding held; awards and professional recognition; knowledge translation and policy engagement activities including meetings and presentations; and, where appropriate, downloadable versions of PowerPoint talks, lectures, briefing notes, and reports; other research, academic and policy affiliations including adjunct appointments. A greater emphasis will be placed on communicating the work of the Adaptation to Climate Change Team (ACT) as a research affiliate of SPP. The main web page will provide clear links to the work of faculty and ACT. The SPP will work with the Associate Dean, Research in FASS on these undertakings.
- *Articulation of research strategy and focus for faculty:* The SPP working group on research will review and update our document outlining research expectations to ensure it reflects a "balance between traditional academic scholarship in peer reviewed journals, books and other venues and more practitioner focused and 'engaged' research" as recommended by the Review Committee. By fall 2017 a research strategy (action plan) for the School will be completed.

2.2 Resource implications (if any):

- Administrative support will be required to keep faculty webpages current with research activities and outputs.

2.3 Expected completion date/s:

- These efforts will be ongoing, although the initial development of the faculty webpages and document of research expectations will be complete by end of Spring 2017. The Research Strategy will be completed by fall 2017.

3. ADMINISTRATION

3.1 Action/s (what is going to be done):

- SPP agrees with the Review Committee that the School is under-resourced in terms of administrative staff relative to the work load and that limits our ability to: market the program as extensively as we would like, publicize research and policy activities and impacts, and enable planning for new initiatives such as executive and professional development programs. The

Review Committee noted that the SPP has the “smallest staff of any policy school in Canada by a wide margin”. The SPP is committed to working with the University to identify means to improve promotion, fundraising, and other engaged activities.

- The SPP has created a more formal committee structure identifying the roles department members have been doing, in response to the suggestions of the Review Committee. This clarifies service roles within the department for faculty members. Service external to the department is not an issue, as faculty serve and have served on a variety of university committees and are very actively and extensively involved in service to external communities.

3.2 Resource implications (if any):

- Increasing administrative support to levels that are conducive for program marketing, communications engagement and innovation will require new investments in the short to medium term. These activities should provide revenue that can be used for cost recovery (see section 5 below).

2.3 Expected completion date/s:

- Faculty administrative assignments are virtually complete.
- Progress in strengthening administrative capacity will be pursued over the next two years.

4. WORKING ENVIRONMENT

4.1 Action/s (what is going to be done):

- The Review Committee complemented the SPP on its exceptional working environment among faculty, staff, and students, and we agree with their suggestions to support collaborations across the University and external communities. SPP acknowledges that it has not publicized adequately the collaborations that faculty members have been engaged in. Section 2 notes the improvements in web pages that will help identify these linkages.
- Collaborations with Urban Studies will be continued following the very successful regional governance initiative in 2015-16.
- Over the next two years a focus will be increased engagement with other units in FASS and the university.

4.2 Resource implications (if any):

- Administrative support will be required to effectively communicate and publicize research collaborations.

4.3 Expected completion date/s:

- Web pages will be standardized, updated, and completed by Fall 2016.
- Collaborations with other units will continue and expand into the foreseeable future.

5. DEVELOPMENT OF PROFESSIONAL PROGRAMS

5.1 Action/s:

- The Review Committee noted that the SPP is at a crossroads where it can stay as a small, high quality graduate program with one main degree – the MPP, or contemplate expansion in the form of undergraduate education (noted in section 1) and additional professional education that could take a variety of forms. The SPP wishes to explore the appetite of SFU to engage in strategic planning for the development of graduate professional programs. Professional programming includes an executive MPP (as outlined in a submission by the Director for an SFU development grant), short-term intensive programs in specific areas of SPP expertise, and cooperating with other graduate programs such as Urban Studies to offer joint degrees and/or graduate diplomas. These initiatives provide revenue as well as increased visibility and influence of the School with external communities. Any form of expansion requires SFU's support and its commitment to program stability, faculty and staff resourcing. The Review Committee concluded that with SFU's support, these investments would be "repaid both financially and in terms of the visibility and stature of the university".

5.2 Resource implications (if any):

- The Review Committee noted that substantial administrative support and resources will be required to develop, implement, and run any additional professional program(s). The School does not have the capacity to implement new initiatives with current levels of support, and the Review Committee noted that it can take a couple of years for new programs of this nature to become self-sufficient and raise additional revenue.
- Developmental and planning funds will be required in 2017-18 for a Masters Executive program in the range of \$200,000.

5.3 Expected completion date/s:

- If there is support from the Dean and senior administration to explore additional initiatives, the SPP will engage in developing a strategic plan and business model that identifies potential professional programs. The time line for completion pending discussions with the administration and within the department is 2018-19.
- Short term professional programs will commence in 2019-20.

6. SUCCESSION PLANNING AND NEW DIRECTOR

6.1 Action/s:

- The Review Committee concurred with the SPP that there is urgent need for a viable succession plan for the School, with the recruitment of a new Director the top priority. With four faculty members over the age of 65, no authorized tenure track positions, and two junior faculty in limited term positions, it is crucial that the SPP and senior administration engage immediately in developing a succession plan that allows for the orderly renewal of the department incorporating appointments of a new Director and faculty at both the junior and senior level to ensure continuity of the program and sustains policy relevant experience. In fulfilling plans to broaden our reach, diversify and expand the programs and networks, it is vital to secure a Director at the senior level who has substantial public policy expertise. The optimal approach is to secure approval in Fall 2016 to commence an external search by the end of that semester. Should that not be successful an internal university search should commence in Spring 2017.

6.2 Resource implications (if any):

- A minimum of one position for the new Director (for 2017-18) and ideally, tenure track positions for at least two junior faculty (that can be bridged to future retirements).

6.3 Expected completion date/s:

- Support for recruiting a new Director needs to be finalized by the beginning of Fall 2016 semester so a search can begin in September 2016. Succession planning and committed resources for faculty renewal should be finalized by the end of the 2016-17 academic year.

7. STRATEGIC PLANNING

7.1 Action/s:

- The Review Committee recommended and the SPP strongly concurs that in consultation with our Dean, the department develops a five-year strategic plan that: supports the School's educational goals, outlines a sustainable financial model; specifies a staffing model with faculty in appropriate classifications; provides sufficient support staff to be able to implement the action plan, and recruits a new Director.
- As part of this the External Review Committee comments regarding the need to balance costs with programming requirements will be considered.

7.2 Resource implications (if any):

- The strategic plan will be completed with existing resources. Additional resources needed for the School may be identified as part of the strategic planning process.

7.3 Expected completion date/s:

- Over the 2016-17 academic year.

The above action plan has been considered by the Unit under review and has been discussed and agreed to by the Dean.

<p>Unit Leader (signed)</p> <p>Name <i>Nancy [Signature]</i></p> <p>Title <i>Acting Director</i></p>	<p>Date</p> <p><i>26 September 2016</i></p>
--	---

Section 2 - Dean's comments and endorsement of the Action Plan:

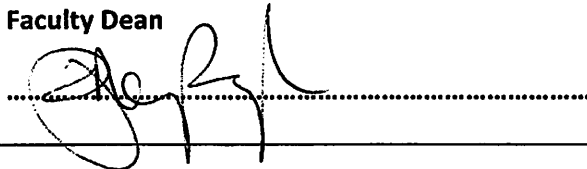
I met with Doug McArthur and Dr. Maureen Maloney (Director, and Acting Director, respectively) of the School of Public Policy on June 29 2016 with Glynn Nicholls (Office of the VPA) to discuss the external review prepared by Ken Rasmussen (University of Regina), Frances Woolley (Carleton University), and Susan Mayer (University of Chicago).

Our office has given close consideration to the external review and to the detailed response from the School of Public Policy. The external reviewers have produced a thoughtful assessment, capturing the strengths found in the School and identifying some of the challenges it faces.

As the attached Action Plan outlines, the School plans to address some of the key recommendations in relation to programming (MPP capstone restructuring, rationalization of MPP electives, potential undergraduate course development, assessing viability of an Executive Masters), and research (increasing the research profile of faculty through enhanced articulation and communication of existing programs of research, and developing a unit level research strategy).

The most pressing issues identified are the need for the unit to identify a new Director to take the helm commencing September 2017, for faculty renewal and enhanced staffing support. We are committed to working with the School to put in place a new Director, and to ensure that it has the faculty and staff complement to maintain the high quality of its work. Specifically, our office has sought the VPA's approval to hire 1 tenure track appointment as part of the Faculty's hiring plan for 2017-2018. In addition, we are committed to continue the renewal process (faculty and staff) in future years as part of an overall strategic faculty plan.

Faculty Dean



Date

September 9 2016

School of Public Policy Plan for Assessing the Success of its Educational Goals

June 2016

The School of Public Policy formulated its educational goals in preparation of the self study for its external review. This document presents the educational goals and the School's plan for assessing the success of the goals.

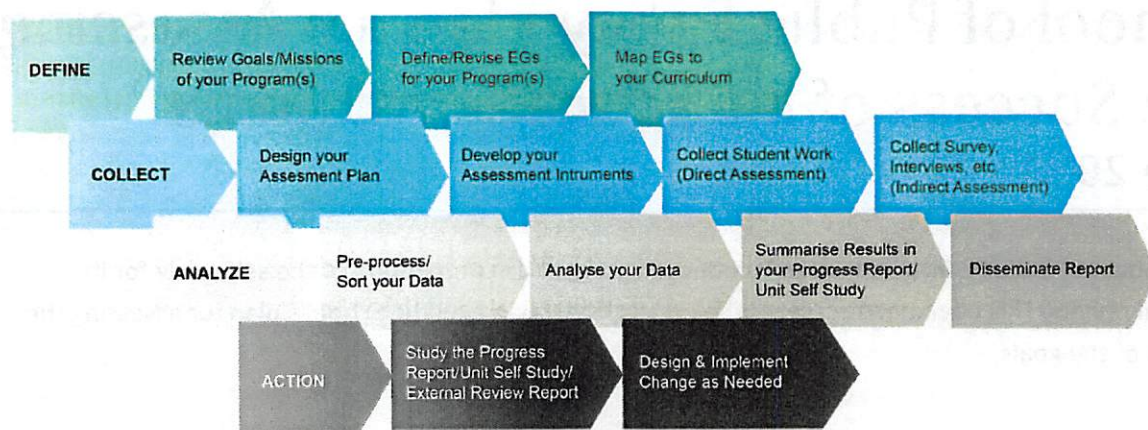
School of Public Policy Educational Goals:

Through their course of study in the MPP program, students will develop skills and competencies to:

1. Apply an understanding of how public policy is framed in terms of institutions, ideas, and interests;
2. Apply theoretical and empirical research to the critical analysis of policy issues based on societal objectives of a modern democratic state;
3. Demonstrate competence and literacy in quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods;
4. Collect, organize, and integrate information from individuals, organizations, government agencies, and communities into policy analysis;
5. Conceptualize, undertake, and complete, with original research, a major policy analysis project;
6. Demonstrate communication skills tailored to a variety of audiences;
7. Undertake collaborative analysis and apply professional and decision making skills in group settings; and
8. Use practical workplace and networking skills to be adaptive and successful in pursuing diverse opportunities in local, national and international working environments.

Assessment Plan

The plan has the following components. The plan will be reviewed by the department at regular intervals (at departmental meetings after the end of each semester when outcomes of student evaluation responses are received and annual department retreats). The stages follow and adapt the flow chart developed by the Teaching and Learning Centre (TLC):



Our proposed adaptation of this process is as follows:

- The Curriculum Committee is tasked with coordinating the mapping of the educational goals into specific learning outcomes for each course taught in the MPP program. Instructors of courses to be taught in the Fall 2016 semester will provide their learning outcome plans to the committee. These plans will include:
 - The course’s articulated learning outcomes (LOs)
 - How the LOs map to the educational goals
 - How the course will assess students’ achievement of LOs and educational goals (e.g., role of course requirements, testing, assignments, student evaluations (both formal as part of the new student evaluation process and informal discussion with students, feedback during the course, etc.).
 - Faculty will be encouraged to work with the Teaching and Learning Centre (TLC) and the FASS support people in this process. We will pilot the worksheet provided by the TLC (attached below) as we find it a very useful starting point.
- At the end of the Fall 2016 semester, instructors of the courses taught will provide a short report to the Curriculum Committee with their assessment of the success of their LOs in meeting the educational goals. The Curriculum Committee will collate these reports and provide a report to the department for dissemination and discussion. Learnings and conclusions drawn for subsequent semesters will be discussed at a department meeting.
- This process will be repeated with the courses taught in the Spring 2017 semester (all our courses are taught only once per academic year other than the capstone completion course).
- The Curriculum Committee will collate results for the academic year and provide a summary report to be discussed at an annual departmental retreat.
- Each subsequent semester, faculty will update their LOs and assessment processes incorporating lessons learned and follow the process as discussed above.
- Annual reviews will be collated and assessed in an annual departmental in preparation of the 4th year report as required by the Senate.

Assessment Plan/Report Card

This form is intended to facilitate documentation of program-level Education Goals assessment for unit self-study, internal, and external reporting. Units can customize and adapt this form to their unique needs. This means adding columns, removing columns or creating an entirely new form.

Unit/Program: _____ Date: _____

Unit EG Coordinator: _____ Unit Chair/Director: _____

See pages 3-8 for discipline specific examples

PROGRAM EGs	COMPONENTS/ DEFINITIONS OF EGs	DATA SOURCE	DIRECT ASSESSMENT	INDIRECT ASSESSMENT	YEARS/ SEMSTERS OF DATA COLLECTION	MAJOR FINDINGS	ACTIONS RESULTED FROM FINDINGS
Effective group work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time managements • Responsiveness to feedback 	BUS 1XX	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group project • Presentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey 	Fall 2014	Majority of students lacked basic knowledge in group work	Teach basic activities: writing minutes & agendas; facilitating discussions; etc.

For your Assessment Plan, you should fill out these sections

Save these two columns for your Analysis & Action phase. Once filled out, this entire table can be included in the External Review report

Overall Results & Actions: The assessment results were evaluated by the faculty members at a retreat held in August 2015. On average, 85% of students met the educational goals of our program. Based on the results, the faculty members recommended additional assessment of "Effective group work" as an EG, and to provide formal feedback to students on newly created assignments: writing a meeting agendas and minutes, facilitating discussion, etc. Furthermore.....

Include an overall summary of the assessment results and proposed actions

